

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the above amendments. As the Examiner will note, applicant has revised original independent claim 1 and dependent claims 3 through 6. Applicant also cancelled original claim 3. Applicant believes that these changes to the claims should resolve the objections as stated by the Examiner on page 2 of the Official Action, as well as the rejections to certain claim language (identified in the Official Action as subparts (a) through (j)) under the second paragraph of Section 112. The change in amended claim 5 from "700°C" to --500°C—finds support on page 12, ¶25 of the specification.

The examiner will also note that applicant has added new claims 8 through 12, which all depend from revised independent claim 1 and find support at, for example, the following portions of the specification: claim 8 (page 12, ¶25 and original claim 1); claim 9 (pages 8-9, ¶¶ 16-19 and Fig. 1); claim 10 (pages 9-10, ¶19 and Fig. 2); claim 11 (page 10, ¶¶20-21 and Fig. 3); and claim 12 (¶20 and Fig. 4). Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 8 through 12 are allowable over the prior art of record for at least the same reasons as stated by the Examiner on pages 4 and 5 of the Official Action.

In response to the Examiner's requirement for a substitute oath/declaration (Official Action at 1), the undersigned has requested, but not yet received, a substitute declaration from the named inventor. The Examiner's requirement under 37 C.F.R. 1.67(a) is noted and applicant expects to file the new declaration shortly.

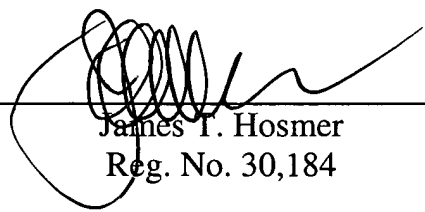
LYON
Appl. No. 09/992,004
March 12, 2004

In view of the above amendments (and subject to submission of the substitute declaration), applicant respectfully requests prompt reconsideration and early allowance of claims 1 and 3 through 12.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: _____


James T. Hosmer
Reg. No. 30,184

JTH:lsp
1100 North Glebe Road, 8th Floor
Arlington, VA 22201-4714
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100